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E.O. 11652:XGDS-3

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, MASS, IS, XF, US

SUBJECT: WEIZMAN VISIT: HARDWARE AND PEACE STRATEGY

REF: TEL AVIV 3387

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF TALKS WITH WEIZMAN AT DEFENSE
AND STATE FOR YOUR BACKGROUND.

2. HARDWARE.

3. AT MARCH 8 WEIZMAN MEETING WITH SECRETARY BROWN, TIME
ONLY PERMITTED A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF F-16/15 REQUIRE-
MENTS AND CERTAIN HELICOPTER ISSUES. AS CONCERNS THE F-16,
WEIZMAN MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR A TOTAL OF 90 AIRCRAFT
AND 25 F-15S. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE U.S.
HAD NOT COMMITTED ITSELF TO ANY NUMBERS IN PREVIOUS
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EXCHANGES, AND SECRETARY BROWN MADE THE POINT THAT SINAI II
FORMALIZED OUR DISCUSSIONS OF ISRAEL'S DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS
BUT DID NOT COMMIT THE USG TO ANY SPECIFIC NUMBERS ON
ITEMS. ON THE F-16, WEIZMAN PROPOSED THAT WE CONSIDER
MAKING AVAILABLE TO THE ISRAELIS ABOUT EIGHT ADDITIONAL
FROM PRE-PRODUCTION EXPERIMENTAL MODELS FOLLOWING THE

FORMAT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE F-15 INTO ISRAELI
FORCES. WEIZMAN ALSO ASKED FOR AN ACCELERATED DELIVERIES
SCHEDULE FOR F-16S (WITHOUT REFERENCE TO NUMBER),

HOPING TO GET THEM INTO THE ISRAELI INVENTORY BY 1980. SECRETARY BROWN PROMISED TO LOOK INTO BOTH OF THESE WITH NO COMMITMENT. IT WAS LATER CLARIFIED THAT THE 75 F-16S WERE PART OF THE "PACKAGE" AND DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT FROM PRE-PRODUCTION MODELS OR ACCELERATED DELIVERY OF THE 75 IN THE PACKAGE WOULD BE CONTINGENT UPON THE APPROVAL OF THE PACKAGE.

4. AT ONE POINT IN THE DISCUSSION WEIZMAN ASKED IF WE WERE TAKING NEGATIVE POSITIONS ON MILITARY PROCUREMENT REQUESTS BECAUSE OF THE "CURRENT DIFFICULTIES". THE QUESTION WAS POSED SPECIFICALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL F-15S AND F-16S BUT OBVIOUSLY HAD BROADER APPLICABILITY. IN THIS RESPECT, WEIZMAN HAD SAID HE HAD HOPED THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO TELL BEGIN IN NEW YORK THAT THE USG HAD AGREED TO 15 ADDITIONAL F-16S AND 10 ADDITIONAL F-15S. BROWN DENIED THAT WE WERE LINKING ISRAELI PROCUREMENT TO THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT WE VIEWED MATMON C AS A FRAMEWORK FOR A CONTINUING DISCUSSION BETWEEN US, NOTING THAT MATMON C ITSELF COVERS OVER EIGHT YEARS.

5. OVER LUNCH LATER AT THE PENTAGON, WEIZMAN MADE
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CLEAR THAT ISRAEL'S REQUEST FOR U.S. TANKS WAS NOT INTENDED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR FURTHER PRODUCTION OF THE "MERKAVA" TANK. ISRAEL NEEDED TO FLESH OUT BRIGADES EQUIPPED WITH BOTH TANK MODELS. HE ALSO STATED THAT IF WE WERE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO EXPAND KFIR PRODUCTION FROM 18 TO 24 PER YEAR (AS AGAINST THE 48 PER YEAR STATED IN MATMON C) HE WOULD REGARD THIS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO OUR PERMISSION TO SELL KFIRS TO TAIWAN.

6. HE AND BROWN AGREED TO DEFER DETAILED TALKS ON COOPERATION ON R & D PROJECTS. WEIZMAN MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR A DOLLARS 1.5 BILLION FMS LEVEL, USING STANDARD ISRAELI ARGUMENTS, AND BROWN MADE CLEAR OUR INTENTION TO STICK WITH THE DOLLARS 1 BILLION LEVEL, ARGUING, INTER ALIA, THE COMPETING CLAIMS WITHIN OUR GLOBAL CEILING.

7. IN HIS MARCH 9 MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, WEIZMAN NOTED THAT BEGIN WOULD HEAVILY CRITICIZE THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE ON THE HILL ON GROUNDS THAT IT TWISTS THE SINAI II AGREEMENT AND THAT IT LINKS OTHER MILITARY SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL. THE SECRETARY DESCRIBED OUR RATIONALE FOR PUTTING THE THREE AIRCRAFT INTO A PACKAGE AND NOTED THAT THIS WAS SUPPORTIVE OF THE PEACE PROCESS. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT THE F-15S WOULD HELP US TO KEEP THE SAUDIS SUPPORTING THE SADAT INITIATIVES. WEIZMAN THEN SUGGESTED THAT WE HAVE MADE A MISTAKE IN NOT

DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WITH THE ISRAELIS. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT WE HAD INFORMED THE GOI IN ADVANCE AND CLARIFIED THAT THE F-15S WOULD NOT BE BASED AT TABUK. WEIZMAN EXPANDED ON HIS PREVIOUS COMMENT AND MADE CLEAR THAT WHAT HE MEANT BY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS WAS TO TIE THE F-5S TO EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS TO THE ISRAELIS ON THE OUTSTANDING SINAI ISSUES.

8. WEIZMAN THEN SAID THAT HE WOULD SUGGEST A BARGAIN TO
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THE PRIME MINISTER OVER THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE. PERHAPS THE U.S. COULD AGREE TO PROVIDE THE ISRAELIS 15 MORE F-16S AND 10 MORE F-15S. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, WEIZMAN STATED THAT EVEN IF WE DID GIVE GREATER NUMBERS OF AIRCRAFT THE GOI WOULD NOT SUPPORT THE PACKAGE. HE EVEN DEMURRED ON THE POSSIBILITIES THAT SUCH A BARGAIN MIGHT REDUCE ISRAELI OPPOSITION.

9. PEACE STRATEGY.

10. AT LEAST AN HOUR OF THE HOUR-AND-A-HALF MEETING MARCH 8 WAS DEVOTED TO WEIZMAN PRESENTING HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE PEACE TALKS. WEIZMAN'S MAIN INTEREST SEEMED TO BE TO POSITION HIMSELF AS BEGIN'S SUCCESSOR--DOING SO BY PORTRAYING HIMSELF AS THE REASONABLE MAN. HE FOCUSED HIS REMARKS PRIMARILY ON EGYPT AND THE DESIRABILITY OF A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT. HE PAID FULL TRIBUTE TO SADAT AS A MAN OF PEACE. HE STRESSED OVER AND AGAIN HOW MUCH HE AND EGYPTIAN LEADERS GOT ALONG, AND IN A NUMBER OF CASES SHIED AWAY FROM MATMON C REQUESTS TO SHOW THAT HE WAS NOT BOUND BY BUREAUCRACY OR POLITICS.

11. THE OVERALL THRUST OF HIS REMARKS ON THE PEACE TALKS WAS DESIGNED TO EMPHASIZE THAT, EVEN IN THE BEST OF FORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES (A SEPARATE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT), ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS COULD ONLY BE MET BY THE TOTALITY OF THE REQUESTS IN MATMON C. HIS ARGUMENTS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

A. THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION LIVE IN PEACE, BUT THE U.S. IS STILL ARMED TO THE TEETH IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED FOR THE UNFORTUNATE CONTINGENCY OF WAR. BECAUSE THE
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U.S. IS STRONG, WAR WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS QUITE A REMOTE POSSIBILITY.

B. ALTHOUGH SADAT AND GAMASY WOULD GUARANTEE EGYPT

WOULD CARRY OUT ITS PROMISES IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE, ISRAEL HAD TO FACE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEIR SUCCESSORS MIGHT NOT.

C. SYRIA HAS NOW REPLACED EGYPT AS THE PRIMARY SECURITY CONCERN OF ISRAEL. THE NORTHEASTERN FRONT WOULD FACE ISRAEL WITH A COMBINATION OF 4,000 IRAQI AND SYRIAN TANKS, AND MAJOR MODERN AIR FORCES. THIS IS NOT EVEN TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE POSSIBILITY THAT JORDAN MIGHT JOIN IN ANY HOSTILITIES.

12. WEIZMAN MADE THE FOLLOWING THREE POINTS AS CONCERNS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE PEACE PROCESS:

A. EGYPT CAN AND SHOULD MAKE A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. THE U.S. SHOULD ACTIVELY BE SUPPORTING SUCH A PEACE. JORDAN IS NOT IMPORTANT. WE ARE MAKING A MISTAKE IN OFFERING F-15S TO THE SAUDIS NOW; WE SHOULD USE THE AIRCRAFT AS LEVERAGE TO OBTAIN SAUDI SUPPORT FOR A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE AGREEMENT.

B. NO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL EVER SIGN A TREATY WHICH MEANS TOTAL ISRAELI MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK. EVEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE, ISRAEL WILL HAVE NEED FOR CERTAIN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE WEST BANK (SEVERAL TIMES HE MENTIONED RADARS ON THE RIDGE LINES).

C. WEIZMAN IS VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND ABOUT THE BEGIN VISIT. HE POINTED OUT THAT SADAT HAS MADE A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN POLICY. BEGIN HAS ALSO MADE A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN
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POLICY (OFFERING TO RETURN ALL OF THE SINAI TO EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY). ONLY THE U.S. CONTINUES TO ADHERE TO ITS OUTMODED FORMULAS CONCERNING THE WEST BANK THAT DATE FROM 1967. HE HOPES THE U.S. CAN CHANGE ITS POLICY AS CONCERNS THE WEST BANK WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT ISRAEL'S VITAL SECURITY NEEDS FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS INVOLVE THE WEST BANK. IN THE CONTEXT OF SUCH A CHANGE IN POLICY ON OUR PART, HE WOULD HOPE THAT BOTH COUNTRIES CAN MAKE A "NEW BEGINNING" AS A RESULT OF AGREEMENTS REACHED NEXT WEEK WITH BEGIN.

13. WEIZMAN WANTED TO DRAW HIMSELF SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO BEGIN, WHILE NOT DENYING THAT SOME DIFFERENCES EXIST. HE SAID THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM WAS A REVOLUTION FOR SADAT, WHAT BEGIN HAS BEEN SAYING THESE LAST FEW MONTHS HAS BEEN REVOLUTIONARY FOR HIM GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND. HE STRESSED THAT OVER A HUNDRED MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET WOULD BE WITH

BEGIN ON REFUSING TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK.

14. WEIZMAN AND THE SECRETARY HAD A DISCUSSION OF OVER ONE-AND-A-HALF HOURS MARCH 9. THE FOCUS WAS ON THE PEACE PROCESS AND PARTICULARLY THE ISRAELIS' APPARENT INABILITY OR REFUSAL TO COMPREHEND THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL'S ADHERING TO THE ORIGINAL INTERPRETATION OF 242, I.E., THAT IT REQUIRES ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS. THEY HAD AN EXHAUSTIVE EXCHANGE. WEIZMAN CONTINUALLY SHIFTED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONVERSATION, WHICH WAS ALWAYS WITHIN THIS GENERAL CONTEXT, AMONG THE FOLLOWING:

A. PERSISTENT EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLY SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE AGREEMENT.

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B. THE IRRELEVANCE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA TO THE REALLY IMPORTANT BUSINESS AT HAND--A SEPARATE PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT.

C. HIS GREAT PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR CONFRONTATION AND COMPLETE DEADLOCK WITH BEGIN UNLESS WE WERE MORE "FLEXIBLE" IN OUR INTERPRETATION OF 242.

15. ON THE BEGIN VISIT, WEIZMAN EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN THAT WE WOULD INSIST ON A PUBLIC DECLARATION BY BEGIN ENDORSING WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK WHICH COULD RESULT IN BEGIN STATING THAT HE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK AND "WE WOULD ALL PACK UP OUR BAGS." HE RETURNED TO THIS THEME REPEATEDLY, ASKING THAT WE THINK CREATIVELY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO TRY TO FIND A WAY TO AVOID SUCH A RESULT. THE SECRETARY TOLD HIM THAT THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WAS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE--ALL ISRAEL HAD TO DO WAS AGREE THAT RESOLUTION 242 ALSO APPLIED TO THE WEST BANK AND THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS FINAL BORDERS IN NEGOTIATIONS.

16. AS CONCERNS THE SINAI NEGOTIATIONS, WEIZMAN STATED THAT:

-- THE SETTLEMENTS AND AIRFIELDS NEAR EILAT WERE MAIN STICKING POINTS (HE COULD NOT REALLY DEFEND THE SECURITY VALUE OF THE SETTLEMENTS)

-- SADAT HAD MORE DOMESTIC FLEXIBILITY THAN BEGIN ON THESE ISSUES

-- HE HOPED SADAT WOULD AGREE TO LET THE ISRAELIS KEEP BOTH THE SETTLEMENTS AND THE AIRFIELDS.

17. ON MARCH 10, WEIZMAN MET PRIVATELY WITH PRESIDENT

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AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES.
WEIZMAN LATER DESCRIBED THE MEETING TO AMBASSADOR LEWIS
AS "FRANK AND POSITIVE".
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